

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 17, 2016

Contact: Andy Olson
Office: (208) 528-2650

Health Advisory Issued for Henrys Lake & Upper Island Park Reservoir People advised to avoid contact with harmful algae

(Fremont County) – A health advisory was issued today for Henrys Lake and upper Island Park Reservoir in Island Park, Idaho, by Eastern Idaho Public Health and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Water samples confirmed the presence of the blue-green algae species *Microcystis*, *Anabaena*, and *Aphanizomenon*—species with the potential to produce dangerous toxins. Precaution is advised. The public will be advised when the concern no longer exists.

Blue-green algae are microscopic bacteria that occur naturally in healthy water bodies. Under the right conditions the physical appearance of blue-green algae blooms can be unsightly, often causing thick green mats along shorelines. They might also cause an unpleasant odor or stench. They occur in water conditions that are common during the warmer summer months.

People recreating near Henrys Lake and Upper Island Park Reservoir are advised to avoid swallowing or inhaling water and to avoid direct contact with water containing visible algae. Drinking water from the lake is especially dangerous. The toxins cannot be removed by boiling or filtering the water. If people choose to eat fish from this area, they should remove all fat, skin, and organs before cooking since toxins are more likely to collect in those tissues.

Children and pets are particularly susceptible to the effects of blue-green algae. People exposed to blue-green algae might experience skin and eye irritation, nausea, diarrhea, numbness of hands and feet, and/or difficulty breathing. If symptoms occur, call your doctor. For animals, symptoms might include muscle spasms, decreased movement, labored breathing, convulsion, and death. If pets are experiencing these symptoms, call your veterinarian immediately.

For questions about blue-green algae, please visit <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae/> or contact Andy Olson, Water Quality Analyst, at DEQ. He can be reached at 208-528-2650.